

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: NEW/UPGRADED TEST STANDS FOR WATER METER TESTING**

**BACKGROUND:**

The City's Water and Pollution Control Department has a long-standing water meter testing and repair program. The testing of all water meters continues to be a vital part of this program to ensure that water utility customers are being billed accurately for the water they use. The volume of water measured is also the basis for calculating sewer charges, so meter accuracy is doubly important.

The current test stand for large meters was purchased in the 1950s. It is showing signs of wear, and replacement parts are no longer available. It is important to verify the accuracy of large meters because larger meters typically are installed at locations where the largest volume of water is used. Inaccurate, high-volume meters have the highest potential to reduce revenue for the utility. A major improvement with a new test stand will be the addition of scale-mounted test tanks. This method of measuring the water volume is the most accurate means of testing water meters for accuracy.

The small meter test stand was purchased in the early 1990s. It functions well and is in good, operable condition. Scale-mounted test tanks will be added to this test stand as an upgrade to improve testing accuracy for smaller water meters.

A single-source negotiation was used for this purchase. MARS Company is the only known manufacturer that makes test stands for large meters. These test stands have the proper configuration to test compound and turbine water meters according to American Water Works Association (AWWA) and various meter manufacturers' specifications. This involves requirements for the proper amount of piping before and after the water meter to obtain accurate test results. MARS is also the only known manufacturer that makes a test stand that meets these requirements to test the city's large meters.

The single-source procurement was conducted in conformance with the City's Purchasing Policies. The approved Capital Improvements Plan includes \$125,000 for the purchase of this equipment. Staff had estimated a purchase price of between \$110,000 and \$115,000. The price offered by MARS Company is \$109,077.71.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Award a contract to MARS Company of Ocala, Florida, in the amount of \$109,077.71 to purchase a water meter test stand for large meters and to upgrade the small meter test stand.

2. Do not award a contract at this time.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The need to provide Ames water utility customers with consistent meter accuracy will continue for years to come. Through accurate metering, customers can be assured they are fairly contributing to the operation of the water and sewer utilities.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby awarding a contract to MARS Company of Ocala, Florida in the amount of \$109,077.71 to purchase a water meter test stand for large meters and to upgrade the test stand for small meters.